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## SSG Briefing

Taiwan and the FXStatus of Taiwan's Request for the FX

Taiwan formally requested the planning and requirements data for the FX (both the F5G and the F16/79) in March 1981. This request is part of the formal sales process. The U.S. Government has not yet responded and, for its part, Taiwan has not specified quantities or financing terms for a new aircraft. Taiwan has had a series of private talks with the aircraft manufacturers, however, on these subjects.

Pressure Taipei is Exerting for the FX

Taiwan lobbied intensively for the FX aircraft until June 1981, when Chiang Ching-kuo reportedly ordered an end to the public pressure campaign on the U.S. Chiang apparently believes that Taiwan's security needs will be addressed favorably by the U.S., although he recognizes that Taipei may not receive the FX.

Alternatives to the FX and Reactions in Taipei and Beijing

Taiwan believes that it needs additional aircraft to replace the rapidly aging F-100s, F-104s and F-5As, all of which will have to be withdrawn from the inventory by the mid-1980s. Taiwan's public pressure for an FX, however, has been primarily motivated by the political symbolism.

Other aircraft alternatives are available, ranging from the transfer of refurbished F-104Gs from the NATO inventory to the sale of additional F5Es, which are now being co-produced on Taiwan. This co-production program will end in June 1983.

The F5E could also be upgraded with the AIM-9L air-to-air missile, which would give Taiwan's aircraft the head-on target acquisition capability that they currently lack. Other methods of upgrading the F5E include provision of the improved avionics that will be part of the F5G.

Although Taipei would probably be satisfied with these alternatives to the FX, Beijing has made it clear that it will not agree to a sale of an FX, or to a significant enhancement of the F5E's capabilities. China is determined to gain U.S. agreement to open conversations on the issue of arms sales to Taiwan. At a minimum Beijing will seek some sort of acknowledgement, however vague, that sales will cease at some point in the future. If it achieves this objective, China may well show some flexibility on the nature and scale of arms sales to Taiwan.

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